

Halo: Dark Viking

by Torched Arrow

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Summary: From August 23rd 2552, to March 3rd 2553, we follow the storyline of Jack-A260, a Spartan-III deployed to multiple operations around the Halo storyline. Note: Dark Viking takes place in an alternate timeline. It does not officially happen in Halo canon.

1. First Floor: Captains, Helmets, AI's

****First floor: Captains, Helmets, AI's.****

New Alexandria, Eposz

August 23rd 2552, 17:48 Hours

A lone spartan sits in a Pelican. His morale broken, his armor covered in dust and blood. The airborne craft flying over the skies of what used to be New Alexandria, now crumbling buildings and remains of what once used to be the crown jewel of Reach. "We're ten seconds out from the ONI building Lieutenant. Prepare for exfil." mutters the pilot, his voice sounding weak. "Roger." responds the Spartan, standing up. He winces from pain, remembering that he received plasma damage to his right leg, placing his helmet securely on his head. The crew chief moves to open the passenger bay doors, letting the rain and light flood into the small area. The spartan nods at the crew chief; shaking his hand. "I'll see you on the other side." the Spartan stated, and the crew chief responded by nodding his head. The pelican touched down at the landing bay, and allows the passenger to exit.

He heads for the entrance. "Good to see you sir. Right this way." announced a Corporal waiting beyond the doorway. "What's the SITREP on Red, Echo and Gauntlet?" the Spartan grunted, walking alongside the Army Corporal, passing civilians and members of the UNSC alike, injured and assisting the injured. "Assigned to civilian evac ops. We've got another unit in the area running interference against communication jammers the Covies have placed around the city." the

Corporal responded, scratching the back of his head nervously. "I'm heading out in a few minutes with my unit to Club Errera to take one of them down." he murmured. The Spartan ignored that, more concerned with what awaited him up ahead. They stop outside an office, where the Corporal begins to walk away. "Good luck Corporal." he bellowed.

"Jack, come in." a voice announced. He entered, and closed the door. The room damaged, yet still clean. An ONI operative stands behind a desk. Jack approaches, and shakes her hand. "Good to see you're still in one piece. By order of SPECWARCOM, you're being given an AI to assist with further operations on Reach. We're sorry about your team." the Captain announced, removing her helmet. Jack does the same. "Permission to speak 'mam." he responds. "Granted. What is it?" she asks. "Where is the AI?" he says, with a hint of sarcasm. "It'll be here any second now. Fly boys are being shot down almost every 5 minutes." the woman droned, walking around the room to sit down in a chair opposite the Spartan. "Your orders are to head to Sword. Holland has some crazy idea that he's got for his Spartans and he needs boots on the ground to monitor enemy forces." "You've got to be kidding right? Covenant own that sector now. What's he sending them in there for?" he growled. He wasn't particularly happy that some high end ONI brass was sending him on a suicide mission to recce for Holland's team. Less the fact that he had no team, and only has an AI.

"Torch and burn. Halsey's data is still there, and we need to make that her excavation data doesn't fall into their hands. Also, you're gonna need this." She picks up a metal case and places it on her desk. "Hope that's a celebratory cake for when we win." he joked. "Came up from Seongam this morning. You're also being chosen to field test this." she responds, entering a security code and unlocking the case. She removes a prototype of the MK VI helmet from the box, and places it next to the case. "It must be my birthday. Why choose me?" he asks, scratching his face with a gloved hand. "You're the second Spartan to receive an AI. We need you to field test this helmet for future operations." she mutters quietly. "With your rating, you were the second choice for the prototype. However the first choice is out of our hands at the moment. Sergeant, come in." gesturing for the Marine to enter, he is covered in dust and charcoal, his leg bleeding. He carries another box, and places it next to the helmet. "Package is here and intact mam." he bellows. "Sergeant, you're bleeding." Jack murmurs, trying to think of what kind of witty remark he'll get from him.

"I ain't got time to bleed."

Jack moves towards the landing bay of the ONI tower, and sees a Falcon land. A spartan exits the pilot seat, and motions that it's all his. Jack responds by wiping two fingers across his faceplate, and enters the Falcon, flying over the hill and out towards the Ice Shelf. "Head on a north easterly bearing, we'll avoid contact." the AI Alice lectured. She was only new, and was teeming with an overload of information. "Phoenix One, this is Noble Actual. Come in over.", Colonel Hollands voice booming through Jack's helmet. "Go ahead Noble Actual." Jack responds, putting Hollands voice on loudspeaker in the cockpit. "I need you to set up an observation post two kilometers away from the entrance of Sword Base. Move your Falcon close by, as I'm sure the Covenant won't be pleased that they have an uninvited guest in their household. Can you do that for me son?" "Affirmative.

I'm two minutes out from the objective. When will your team be here?" he responds. "They're still in New Alexandria. They'll be out in three days, the area's being glassed. Hope you're ready for a picnic Lieutenant. Holland out."

_Authors notes: First story in the timeline of Jack-260. As discussed before, all of this happens in an alternate timeline. Hope you enjoyed it, and leave your review. _

2. Fist Over Hand

****Fist Over Hand****

Two kilometers from Sword Base, Babd Catha Ice Shelf, Eposz

August 28th 2552, 22:50 Hours

"Noble Actual, this is Phoenix One. Standby for contact report." Jack calls in, set up on a mountain overlooking the entire area. His sniper rifle dug into his shoulder, the sight integrated with his VISR. "Phoenix One, this is Noble Actual. Standing by to copy, over." "I have eyes on Covenant AA guns set up at Airview Base. There are also multiple Revenants situated near the main entrance. Shade's are set up within that AO as well. I estimate enemy resistance will be high." "Good work Jack. Our team is making ready. We'll be on plot within 24 hours. I'll still need you to stay in the vicinity to provide sniper support as necessary." "Roger that. Tell them to let me know when they're here. Out."

Two kilometers from Sword Base, Babd Catha Ice Shelf, Eposz

August 29th 2552, 26:17 Hours

"Phoenix One, this is Noble One. Noble Six and his strike team are moving in from Farragut Station. The rest of my team are currently awaiting his go." a new voice booms through Jack's helmet. "Noble One, Phoenix One. Acknowledged. I'll engage targets at my own discretion after a green light from you." he responds, with a cold voice. "Copy that Phoenix One. Out." After five minutes, a green light pops up on the Spartan's visor, indicating for him to engage. He loads the magazine, and releases the charging handle. He fires one shot, at a plasma battery located near Airview, taking out 6 Covenant. "Alice, what's their ETA?" he queries here. He wondered why she never talked. "Noble Six has acquired a Scorpion and has destroyed both AA guns. The rest of Noble Team is inbound. I recommend moving _closer_ to engage forces at the entrance to ensure Noble's safe arrival." she responds. He applies the safety, disengages the bipod and picks up the rifle. "Noble One, Phoenix One, repositioning. Give me 30 seconds." He runs 500 meters from where he was, and gets into a good position to view the entrance. He once again sets up the sniper rifle, and aims down the sight. He fires two shots at an Elite moving to engage Noble, and downs the target. "We're in Phoenix One. You can exfil. Thanks for the assist. Out." Jack picks up the sniper rifle once again and moves back towards the Falcon, slinging the rifle over his shoulder and withdrawing his M6 SOCOM pistol. "Jack, you have inbound targets. Engage at your own discretion." blurted out Alice, knowing that he had his eyes on the radar and knew they were coming. He reaches the Falcon, and inserts Alice into the mainframe.

Her physical body popping up on the dashboard, reminiscent of a 20 year old woman, wearing a red hoodie, black skinny jeans, and a pair of converse, with almost white-ish skin and long black hair. "Alice, where are we going now." he exclaimed, out of breath. "Forward Operating Base Whiskey, Aszod. We've been requested to assist the final civilian evac transports leaving Reach. Their current operational strength is at 90%." she responds, tugging at her hair, her voice eerily reminiscent of an Australian accent. Jack looks at her confused, as he didn't know that AI's acted so human. "Do you AI's normally act so.. Human?" he asked her, removing his helmet and activating auto-pilot. "What did you expect me to be like? I'm not an alien." "Not at all.. I just, you look nice that's all." he blurts out, checking his M6. A stovepipe jam had appeared in the chamber, and he clears it. "You look nice too." she responds. Before he can respond to her, the emergency systems begin to flash red. "A malfunction in the rotor's. I'm afraid we're going to have to crash land Jack." she says, worryingly. He re holsters his sidearm, places his helmet back on, and plugs Alice back into his head. The Falcon plunges into a petrol station, and explodes, with Jack jumping out beforehand.

3. Once More unto the Breach

****Once More unto the Breach****

Aszod, Eposz

August 30th 2552, 12:37

"You okay Alice?" he asks, then shakes his head. "I'm fine. Armor systems look okay, shields nominal. We're fine." she responds. "How far are we from the base?" he grunts, picking himself up from the ground. "We are currently 5 kilometers away from Whiskey. If we run we can make it." she says to him. He begins to jog, then run, then sprint. He moves through an abandoned factory complex, wielding his knife. He waits next to a wall, and without warning, strikes an Elite in the jaw, killing him instantly. He grabs the Plasma Rifle, and retreats to a way point indicated by his HUD. He stops, and takes a knee behind a car, breathing heavily. Jack-A260 looks over the car, and takes up a leaning position against it. Alice's voice booms through his helmet. "Well, I knew you were lethal but not that lethal." she mutters, monitoring the battle net. "There's an extraction point about 2 clicks away from here, but it's under heavy fire from Covenant forces. I'm not too sure that a Plasma Rifle and an M6 will suit you here Jack." she proclaims. In response, Jack nods. "So I'm guessing there's an arms cache around here somewhere?"

"I'm afraid not. All UNSC armaments in this area are located at that exfil point. Alert, there are multiple Covenant squads in this area. I advise moving away from this current position." Jack gets up, and looks around, only to see a grunt directly in front of him, with it's back turned to him. His eyes dart to his motion tracker, detecting almost 5 times the strength of a small Army squad. "You're crazy if you think you can take them all down" Alice exclaims, knowing fully well that the Spartan would get them out of this. "What's the current kill count so far?" he whispers. "Your current Covenant kill count is two hundred and sixty three. Two hundred and sixty four if you

include that Zealot you took down." she tells him. "Find me an exit out of here, one that's preferably clear of Covies." he asks, knowing fully well that there was no real path clear of Covenant. "You're in luck. There's a small passageway 20 meters from where we are. There's one Jackal there, take him down and we're out of here." she responds, sending a way point in the direction of the passage. Jack slowly gets up, and stealthily moves with a purpose towards the way point.

He readies his SOCOM, and turns the corner, only to reveal an entire covenant squad. "Alice!" he yells, taking cover behind the wall, being fired upon by barrage upon barrage by plasma fire. "I'm sorry. Passageway 5 meters down contains no covenant. Hurry please." "Got it!" he exclaims, running towards the corner, and turning. The alleyway was clear, and a door opens right next to him. He steps inside, and the door slams shut. A group of civilians huddled together next to a staircase all look up at the almost 7ft tall soldier, unsure to trust him. "I'm a Lieutenant with the UNSC Army. I'm here to get you all out of here." he whispers to them, knowing that the Covenant that engaged him beforehand will likely be looking for him. "Where's the rest of your unit?" asks one of the civilians. Jack ignores the question, and points outside. "Right now there's a couple of squads clearing through these housing estates. Where's the safest point in here?" he queries one of them, removing Alice's data card from his helmet, and removing his helmet afterward.

He finds an uplink point, and inserts Alice's module into it. Her body projecting itself onto the uplink point. Jack kneels down next to her, and picks up a first aid kit. "Remove your shoulder pauldron by depressing on the left and right slides located underneath the pauldron itself. There you can also remove the left bicep armor attachment, and access your wound." she states quietly. Jack motions for one of the civilians to come to where he is, and help removing the armor. Alice may have been an AI, but watching Jack assist the civilians, and the civilian assisting Jack gave her some sort of hope. She watches, and then starts to run through more information for him. "Access the first aid kit, and remove the anti-bacterial shot, then the morphine. Apply a bandage, and re-apply your armor. Then apply the bio-foam to the pauldron." she finishes, giving him concerned looks. Jack looks at her, and gives her a smile, something she thought he would never do.

With his wound sealed, Jack motions the civilians to enter the safe zone inside the house, picking up the uplink and his helmet and moving into the safe room. He sets the uplink down again, and queries Alice. "What's the SITREP on the evac site?" "Operational strength is down to 45%. There are 7 transports left for off-planet evacuation. Be advised, one of the evac transports has been shot down. ninety per-" Jack interrupts her by placing a finger over his lips, indicating her to be quiet. "Okay guys. I need to know if any of you have firearms training and or weapons in here." Two civilians raise their hands. "We're security contractors, never leave home without them". He nods, and looks at them all. "I'm going to get you all to that evac site. Once there, we'll be transported off world to Alfold, then Earth." he exclaims, with Alice listening to his every word. She knew he was broken but, knew that he would get these civilians off this planet before it's glassed any further.

****This Town Isn't Big Enough****

Aszod, Eposz

August 30th 2552, 13:10

The civilians load their clothing and possessions into small bags, Jack grabbing ammunition for his SOCOM. "Jack?" Alice quietly asks. Before he can respond, he puts on his prototype Mark VI helmet, and removes Alice from the uplink. He places her back in his head, getting a cold chill from the integration of her to him. "Yes?" he responds quietly. "Operational strength is down to 25%. We have to move fast to get these civilians out of here. Right now." she demands, sounding anxious and pushy. "I'll get it done." he responds to her, loading the M6 and holstering it. "You mean we'll get it done." she states to him. He lets out a small, yet quiet laugh. The civilians make ready, load their weapons, and get ready to leave on the Spartans mark. He counts down from three, ready to kick open the door to let the civilians clear left and right first, then him come through, escort the women and children and move quickly.

"Three, two, one, now!" he kicks the door, knocking it off of it's hinges, breaking away from the sheer mass of the kick from the augmented super soldier. The two contractors move through the doorway, clear left and right, and the Spartan enters through the middle, the civilians following him. "Stay with them. I'm gonna check ahead." he declares to the men. He moves towards the end of the block, and decides it's all clear. He motions for them to get over to where he is, with haste. They run over to where he is, and regroup. "We have 10 minutes to reach that base. They're getting hit hard. Let's get to work guys." he yells. They run across the street, dodging an enemy wraith heading for the base, avoiding multiple patrols. They reach 200 meters from the base when Alice interrupts. "Jack, Operational strength is down to 5%. Last transport is being loaded. We need to hurry." she exclaims. "Roger." he responds, with a tired out voice.

"Titan, Titan, this is Sierra 260. I have seven civilians being escorted by myself towards your position. Hold your fire to the east, we are coming to you." he sends to the base, hoping that they respond. "Spartan, this is Major Douglas. You need to get your civilians here within 15 seconds. We're taking too much fire from Covenant forces and we need to get this transport off planet now!" responds the base. "Come on! We have to move." he yells at the civilians. They turn a corner, and run face to face with the same Jackal that he encountered before. "Not this time." he exclaims, pulling his M6 and firing two center mass shots into the alien, dropping it almost instantly, a needle round fired from the Jackal hitting him in the torso. He turns to the men, women, and children, and pushes them towards the transport. "Major! We're here!" the Spartan yells, pulling out the needle round, unaware of the inbound Covenant Corvette. "Lieutenant, They'll have to stand." the Major exclaims from the opening of the transport. "We can't risk the Covenant seeing a Spartan entering this aircraft. You'll need to find your own transport." he continues. "I'll find my own way sir!" responds the Spartan. "Spartan, there's a Warthog in the garage, I think there's a frigate still planet side. Get to her." yells a Sergeant from the doorway. The Spartan moves to the Warthog, with the family watching from the inside of the aircraft.

He enters the drivers seat, and starts the engine, putting it to full throttle. He exits the base, and drives at 120 m/ph towards the ship breaking yard. "Unknown Frigate located at the Ship Breaking Yard, this is Sierra 260, requesting pickup at Platform Charlie!" "Sierra 035, this is Captain Redfield, of the UNSC Aegis Fate. We copy your last. Echo Five One is en route to you now. Get there fast Spartan, we don't have much time until that Corvette arrives, and our guns are down." "Acknowledged. I'm on my way. Alice, did the civilian transport make it?" he asks her. "It's entering slipspace now. We did a good thing today Jack." she responds, sounding as if she was sad, but happy. "Don't worry. We're almost out of here." he tells her, as to calm her down. A banshee appears behind the Warthog, and fires it's mortar, sending the Warthog flying into the admin building for the ship breaking yard. The force of the impact knocks the Spartan out cold.

"Jack? Jack can you hear me?" cries Alice, afraid that he may be unconscious. He wakes, and looks around, his reaction time slowed down, seeming like time itself had slowed down as well. Slowly, he got up, and started jogging, then running for Platform Charlie. He jumps over guard rails, dodges enemy fire, and reaches the platform. The pelican is nowhere to be seen. "Echo Five One! Where the hell are you!" he yells through the comms system. A pack of brute chieftains approach where Jack is, growling and yelling in foreign languages. He readies a plasma grenade, and his M6D. "Fuck." he whispers, accepting his fate. He aims his SOCOM at the lead chieftain, before suddenly, Echo Five One appears behind him, and fires their main gun, killing the chieftain's. Jack turns, and looks at the crew chief opening the door. He jumps, and enters the passenger bay. A grunt appears with a plasma launcher, and attempts to lock on. Before he can do so, Jack throws a plasma grenade, and detonates a group of fusion coils located near the grunt. The pelican, undamaged, flies away towards the currently moving Aegis Fate.

5. There'll Be Another Time

****There'll Be Another Time...****

UNSC Aegis Fate

August 30th 2552, 13:35

Landing in the docking bay, many Marines divert to weapons, and shut the docking bay door. Alice remains quiet. "You alright?" Jack asks, wondering if she had shut herself down to prevent being taken. "Yeah, I'm just...I'm fine. I was ready to accept being purged." she responds. "Yeah, well, looks like we got lucky." he responds to her, tapping at his TacPad. "Others didn't." The Aegis Fate moving steadfast, narrowly avoiding the Truth and Reconciliation, and entering slipspace. After navigating his way to the cryo-room, Jack inserts Alice into the uplink module located in his cryotube, and gets in. "Have a good sleep", she motions to him. The Spartan responds by moving two fingers over his faceplate, and enters cryosleep.

6. Last One Up, Get The Lights

****Last One Up, Get The Lights****

UNSC Aegis Fate

September 18, 2552, 08:30

Alice pops up on a holographic panel, zipping up her hoodie, and adjusting her hair. "Wakey wakey. We're here." She whispers, trying not to disturb his sleep as much as possible. "Where is 'here'?" he jokes, removing his helmet and scratching his head. "Earth. The date of today is the 18th of September. Hope you slept well." she responds, with some sort of odd smile. Still groggy, Jack reaches for the controls of the door, when they open without touching them. "Don't worry about that, I've got it. Yank me." she whispers, in some sort of joking attempt at not waking up the other troopers. He places his helmet back on, and inserts her module back into his head. "The Captain wants to see you on the bridge Jack. I suggest heading there first. After that, we'll get some food." she murmurs, watching as he pulls himself out of the cryo-tube and starts to walk around. He heads past the cafeteria, feeling his stomach groan, and walks on.

"Lieutenant, good to see you up and running. How did you sleep?" addressed the Captain, smoking a cigar, and holding a cup of Brandy. "Green, sir." the spartan responds. "Glad to hear it! We're docking with Cairo in 48, and I know that the armorer wants to know how the helmet is holding up. Good morning Alice." the Captain announces. Alice activates the loudspeaker in the helmet. "Good morning sir." she exclaims. "Go get some chow. I'll message you when we're close." "Yes sir." the Spartan responded, beginning to walk away. "Oh, and Jack? Try not to make a mess with my boys in there." he continued, taking another puff of his cigar and taking another swig of his Brandy. Jack responds by giving him a simple nod, and walks away.

"Chief's special huh? Cheese Bur-g-er. Unusual." states Alice. "I'm getting that. I don't care what he puts in it, I need a meal." the Spartan declares. He walks up to the counter, and points at the burger, and is given two. He walks away, and sets down on an empty table, removing his helmet and plugging Alice's module into his TacPad, allowing her to manifest herself into her physical form. He starts to eat the meal, whilst Alice notices a group of ODST Shock Troopers sitting two tables away from him, staring Jack down. A Gunnery Sergeant stands up, and moves towards him. "You've got company." Alice announces, with a stupid smirk on her face, pulling the hood of her jacket over her head and pulling the strings, as if to cover her eyes. The ODST sits down next to Jack, and puts out his hand. Jack notices this, and shakes his hand.

"Nice to meet a Spartan who won't kill me by grabbing my hand too hard. Name's Edward. My guys were wondering what you were doing on 'their' ship." he enthused, shaking his head. "I noticed that you were the last one to get on board the Frigate. Did anyone else show at the dry dock?" he continues. "There wasn't. Just me. A lot of people didn't make it out of there." Jack responded, placing his food on the plate and moving it out of the way. "Me and the squad are being re-assigned to the UNSC Say My Name. What about you? Where are you headed?" Edward stated. "Cairo Station. Gotta give the armorer back this helmet. I've been field testing it." he mumbled. Seeing that he hadn't eaten anything, Jack handed his other cheeseburger to Edward. "Have it. I dunno if I can eat two of them." he states, with

Alice uncovering her eyes from the hood.

7. The Armory

****The Armory****

UNSC Aegis Fate, docked with ODP Cairo Station

September 20 2552, 09:40

"All personnel, this is Captain Redfield. We are docking with Cairo Station in one minute. Spartan-260, head for the airlock." the Captains voice boomed over the speaker system, Jack in the Aegis Fate's armory, collecting his weapons. He holstered his M6X, and placed the Tatang back on his belt "Hey, Jack." Edward yells, running towards him. "What's up?" he responds. "I wanted to give you this. For being a part of this war." he states, handing him a Shock Trooper patch. "Thanks mate. Stay safe." the Spartan chuckled, storing the patch in his hard case, and reaching out to shake the ODST's hand. "You too." Eddy responds, shaking Jack's hand, and walking away. The airlock disengages, letting him pass through to the Cairo. "Hey Jack, do you think that we'll still be paired up after giving the armorer the helmet?" asked Alice. Jack noticed a certain worrying tone in her voice. "I'm sure we'll be fine. It's not like we'll be split up." he responds, walking towards the armory.

The Armory's sergeant was sitting at a table, looking at a set of Mark V armor laying in front of him. "Morning Sergeant." the Spartan stated, watching as the Sergeant jumped from his chair and stood at attention.

"Morning sir." he yelled. "At ease Sergeant. We're not at a parade here." Jack responded, with a grin on his face. A few minutes later, it was down to business. "Okay, basically, the helmet is good to go for all around shield integration. AI input is good to go, everything is crystal. Oh, that reminds me Lieutenant, I need to upgrade your armor. New shield tech, all that crap." the Sergeant announced. "How long?" he asked, knowing that Alice was concerned. "A day, two tops. We've got some new armor pieces for you as well. Don't suppose you want those?" the Sergeant responded. "Can you make my TacPad portable?" "Sorry, what did you say sir?" the Sergeant asked, alarmed at the question. "Can. My. Tacpad. Be. Made. Portable. I need information as it comes in." he stated, feeling a chill wash down his spine. "I can do that now sir. Hand it here." the Sergeant announced.

8. More Than His Share

****More Than His Share****

ODP Cairo Station, Geo-Synchronous orbit above Earth

October 15 2552, 02:55

Jack walked the halls of the station, wearing a micro fleece hooded jacket, a pair of jeans, and combat boots. It felt weird not wearing armor, he felt as if someone had stripped him of all of his clothing. "Jack, the armorer said it would take a day or two to upgrade your

armor. It's been a month." Alice stated, sounding infuriated that it was taking so long. "I'm sure he's just making sure I don't put it on, and I die. They need time with those kinds of things. Either way, can't disturb him now, it's almost 3am." Jack conveyed, staring at Earth, and looking for Australia. "Hell of a view, huh." "Sure is. Wish I could go down there." Alice responded to Jack, her figure standing on the guard rail, with her hands in her pockets, her hair done in a ponytail instead of it flowing. "You got augmented for war, wearing a suit of armor for most if not all of your life. Why?" she queried him, looking at his face, scars of battles won and lost, comrades gained and fallen. "My parents died when I was seven. I got asked if I wanted to avenge them. I said yes. I don't regret that decision." he responded quietly, hunching more and more to the guard rail. "If I had a second chance to that, I'd still say yes." he continues.

Alice seemingly becoming more and more empathetic with him. "No. I am an AI. I am not a human." she says to herself, unconvincingly.

"Anyway, It's almost 4am. We need to go to sleep. Let's go." Jack announces, holding his hand out for her to jump back onto the data pad. She dematerializes, and Jack walks away from the view, moving towards his private barracks. He enters, and places Alice's data module into the projector. She materializes, and takes a seat. Jack removes the TacPad from his arm, and places it on the bedside table, Alice jumping next to it. He removes his clothing, bar a T-Shirt and briefs, and gets into bed. "Goodnight Alice." he states, pulling the pillow from underneath him and re-positioning it, falling asleep instantly. Alice turns off the lights, and sits down next to his TacPad, leaning against it, her figure illuminating the room. She sat there the entire night, tossing and turning as if she couldn't find the right place to sit. She watched Jack all night, it somehow calmed her, knowing that if anything were to happen, there would be a almost 7ft super soldier sleeping right next to her ready to do violence on her behalf.

9. Cairo Station

****Cairo Station****

ODP Cairo Station, Geo-Synchronous orbit above Earth

October 20 2552, 07:50

Jack wakes up to the sight of Alice on standby mode right next to him on his pillow. "Alice." he mutters, wondering if she's up. "Yes?" she asks, not realizing that she's sleeping on his pillow. "Oh. I'm sorry. I've received a message from the Master Gunnery Sergeant at the Armory, your armor is ready." she mumbles, embarrassingly. "It's all good. Not going to question anything. I suppose we better get my armor back." he responds, with a smile on his face. He puts his clothes back on, his TacPad, and allows Alice to enter. They exit the room, and find that there are many marines around. "Good morning sir. Hope you slept well." a Private exclaims, with a smile on his face. "I did, thank you for asking. What's with the huge crowds? Actually, it doesn't matter. Just don't start the party without us." he states, walking towards the armory. He enters, and sees the Gunny. "Morning Master Gunns. How's my armor doing?" Jack motions to it, with his

right hand. "Well, it's all upgraded. New shielding has been successfully integrated, and you're all good to go. Oh yeah, one more thing. You don't need to keep removing your AI's module from your helmet. Little new piece of tech came up from Seongam this morning with a set of new armor for the big guy. Touch the uplink module, and the AI is automatically integrated. You can still use the module of course." he announces, proudly.

Seven minutes later, Jack is back in his armor, minus a few changes. "Feels good Gunny. Now all I need is a pillow." says Jack, jokingly. "Be careful with it Lieutenant. Don't want to dent the new car on the test run. Have a good one sir." the Master Gunnery Sergeant responds, with a smile on his face. Jack heads for the elevator, and an almost nostalgic figure emerges from the door. The two Spartans exchange nods, and continue on their way. As Jack enters the elevator, the other Spartan and Master Gunns engage in conversation. "Who was that?" Alice asks Jack, curious as to who the other Spartan was. "Doesn't matter who he is, it's what he did that matters." he responds, leaning against the back of the elevator. 20 minutes later, they were surrounded by Marines, cheering them on. "I don't know about you, but I think that they think you're getting an award. Suddenly, an alarm starts going off, and the Marines get serious, moving themselves to arm and equip. "What the fuck is going on?" yells Jack, grabbing a Corporal by the arm. "Covenant slip space ruptures off our battle cluster!" the marine yells back, moving away to grab a weapon. Jack follows him, and grabs a BR55 Battle Rifle, he looks at it, almost like a kid with a new toy.

"Boarding crafts inbound!" another Marine yells, moving to look at the window. Jack moves to make a defensive posture, and sets up his Battle Rifle next to a hard wall, becoming ambidextrous to engage the enemy. "Alice, can you co-ordinate with the AI that's on board this MAC gun? I need to know where the boarders are coming from." he exclaims, watching the craft move closer and closer to the Cairo, feeling the shock wave from the boarding craft as it hits the Cairo. "Done. First group of boarders are near the main command center. I recommend heading there to get orders, instead of wasting time. So to speak." Alice responds finally, allowing Jack to move. He raises his rifle, and begins to fall back, heading towards the main command center, reaching the location of Lord Hood. "Sir, what do you need me to do?" he asks Hood, grabbing an extra magazine off of the table near him. "We have Rangers landing on the top of the ODP. Repel them to the lower areas, we cannot allow them to create a hull breach above us. Do you understand?" he responds, removing his cap and running his hand over his head, stressed. "Crystal, sir." the spartan responds, nodding his head. "Then get to work. The Chief will take care of the rest. Good luck Spartan." Lord Hood continued, turning back to the main console, Jack reloaded his BR, and continued on to the top of the ODP.

10. Persona Non Grata

****Persona Non Grata****

ODP Cairo Station, Geo-Synchronous orbit above Earth

October 20 2552, 11:55

Jack moved through the vacuum of space, taking care not to tip off

any Rangers that he was amongst them. Withdrawing his Tatang, he gripped it in his left hand, his SOCOM in his right hand. He approached an Elite, facing the massive glass roof over Lord Hood and his two other allies. He jumps on the back of the first elite, and fires his full mag into both of the other elites, allowing no cracks in the glass. He reloads, and is caught off balance by a Ranger behind him, sending him flying into the wall of the ODP. The ranger, now in a perfect position to strike, activates his energy sword. Jack, breathing heavily, kicks the elite in the leg, where the kneecap would be, breaking it. As the elite fell to the floor, the spartan kicked it in the jaw, and grabbed his Tatang, floating in the Zero-G environment, bringing the knife down through the head of it. The now motionless body floating away into space. "Lord Hood, top of the ODP is secure. Coming back to you." "Acknowledged Sierra 260. Sierra 117 is heading to New Mombasa with In Amber Clad to follow the Prophet of Regret. I need you here to co-ordinate ground attacks." "Copy that."

"Lieutenant, you'll be co-coordinating ground attacks against high value Covenant targets. However I need you on the ground. You'll be dropping with a group of ODST's that are heading to ONI's Alpha Site. I have transport to get you to the UNSC Say My Name, once there, you'll be dropping within 10 minutes." Lord Hood announced, wiping his brow. Jack stood silently. "Sir, what if that cruiser jumps?" "I can guarantee you, it won't jump. It'd be too risky. Get prepped Lieutenant. I want you on that ship and in a pod ASAP. Good luck." Hood continued. Jack moved silently away, towards a transport heading for the Say My Name, the crew chief indicating to get on board. "Hurry up sir, we need to go right now." Jack jumped in, and awaited the journey. "Wasn't that Gunnery Sergeant being redeployed to the Say My Name?" Alice whispered, watching Jack check his weapons.

"He sure is, and I'm sure we'll be dropping feet first into hell with him."

11. Helljumpers

****Helljumpers****

UNSC Say My Name, Geo-Synchronous orbit above Earth

October 20 2552, 16:05

The Spartan moves steadfast through the UNSC Say My Name, moving towards the drop pod bay, his heart racing. He hadn't seen action in almost two months. "You'll be fine." Alice says, at a failed attempt to calm his nerves. He stores his weapons, and enters the drop-pod. "Oh, and Sierra 260, one more thing, you'll be dropping into the same LZ that Captain Dare has identified. From there, head to ONI AS, and link up with security forces pushing back the Covenant. Hood out." "Let's hope this all goes off without a hitch." Jack announces, but realizes that he's on no comms with anyone. In less than 5 seconds, the green light is given, and his pod is fired. The recoil and shuddering noise sending him into a nightmare. The pods passing past destroyed frigates, and ships alike. One minute later, the Space Elevator was in sight and so was the Cruiser. "Radiation signatures detected! The cruisers going to jump!" yells Alice, in response, Jack crosses his fingers, and watches the blast hit his pod, sending him flying off course, out of instinct, he grabs the door of the pod,

fearing that it will come off, as he does, he watches as he gets closer and closer to the ground.

Lumumba, New Mombasa

October 20 2552, 16:09

The pod slams into a building with an almighty roar, with Jack hitting his head on the back of the drop pod. He grabs his weapons, and notices a Jackal in front of him. "You fuckers are everywhere." he exclaims, pushing the button to disengage the door, flying, and hitting the Jackal in the face, breaking it's jaw. A boot slams into it's neck, and a shot is fired into it's head. His energy shields recharging, Jack holsters his M6 SOCOM, and checks his MA5KS. He counted how many mags he had: 8 plus one in the weapon. He checks the surroundings, and moves out. "All callsigns, this is Sierra 260. I am currently en route to ONI's Alpha Site. This is the rally point for all survivors. Secondary rally point is Kikowani Station. Out." Jack calls on the radio. "Jack, there are some new upgrades in your helmet. I didn't notice them before. You have access to white and black hot thermal, and night vision. Also integrated is something called VISR. Figured I should tell you now than never." Alice states, watching his every move. He strolls the streets, and encounters a wraith, firing it's main cannon at him. He rolls to his right, and fires off a panic mag at the wraith, hitting the turret gunner. "Side street next to us can bring you around to the back of the Wraith." Alice states, attempting to get through to Lord Hood. "Lord Hood, we are on the ground and are on our way to Alpha Site. Is there any air support?" she continued. "Negative Alice, you're on your own until you reach Alpha Site. Try to get in contact with Captain Dare as well, we've lost comms with her. Out." he responded, with static intercepting his voice. Jack's body swinging around a corner to clear it, and moved up.

"Spartan, over here. Wraith's got us pinned down. We were hoping you could un-pin us." a marine yells out, reloading his M7. Jack nods, and runs towards the back of the Wraith, the turret gunner turning and firing. His shields flaring, Jack readies a frag grenade, tears off the canopy door and jams it into the drivers seat, propelling himself off of it, onto a nearby car. The Wraith explodes in a shower of blue and purple, the marines yelling as their morale is boosted. "Alpha Site is 10 klicks from here. Lets move out." Jack exclaims to the men, throwing a magazine to one of the specialists. Jack looks back, and notices a SUV still intact. He smashes the window, and opens the door, his childhood instincts kicking in as he hot wires the car. The engine sputters, then revs to life, the Spartan motioning for the marines to get in. They jump in, and Jack removes the boot door, allowing them to sit on the edge. He gets back in the drivers seat, and drives off, towards Alpha Site.

12. A Whisper in the Storm

****A Whisper in the Storm****

Kizingo, New Mombasa

October 20 2552, 17:35

The SUV speeds through the streets of New Mombasa, a Phantom on it's

tail. "Piece of junk!" Jack yells, the SUV not reaching a high enough speed. The main gun fires on the Phantom, hitting the rear of the SUV, sending the back axles flying. Jack struggles to take control of the vehicle as it hopelessly swerves until it slams into a traffic pole. "Watch out!" Alice screams, as a wraith follows from behind, and slams into the SUV, ramming it and sending it flying towards an ODS, who ducks for cover, a barrel falling onto his head. "Son of a gun!" he yells out, unaware of what is going on. "Trooper, help me out here!" Jack yells, pinned by a piece of wreckage from the car. The ODS, Mickey, runs over to the Spartan, and pulls off a piece of the car door jamming Jack inside of it. "Thanks for the help Trooper. Get in that tank, before that goddamn Wraith takes it out." Jack exclaims, pointing towards the Scorpion. He eliminates the Wraith, and two Ghosts dropped off, before hopping back out again. "Nice work guys. Covenant's been rolling us back block by block. Every marine in the city is headed for a rally point near the Naval Intelligence building. Spartan, you oughta come with us." a marine announced, reloading his MA5C. "Mickey, get in the tank. Clear us a path to Alpha Site." Jack bellowed, moving to help a wounded marine get up, picking him up and placing him on his shoulder. "We've got a squad of Marines pinned down, far corner in the next plaza. It's packed with Covenant, Lieutenant, so once you get in, don't stop moving." the Marine continues, jumping on the side seat of the Scorpion. Mickey gets in, and starts it up, moving it steadily towards the plaza.

"Gauss Turret's hot, ready to fire!" "Relax, Marine, wait 'till they're in the kill zone!" "Ghosts! They'll see me for sure, I-I gotta take the shot!" "I said hold your fire! Concentrate on the Wraiths at the end of the- Ah hell. Back blast clear, let 'em have it!" Dutch yells, firing his rockets. "Corporal, watch your fire! Friendlies coming in!" Jack yells into his throat mic, running alongside the Scorpion. "Spartan, I'm outta rockets. Kill that Wraith!" Dutch replies, watching the Spartan-III sprint towards the Wraith appearing from nowhere. "Bet you can't stick it." Alice exclaims. "You're on." he replies back, jumping and sliding across the Wraith, falling on the opposite side, where he could jam a Plasma Grenade in the engine. He does so, and sprints away from the blast. "Nice of you to join us. Head to my position." Dutch announces, Mickey and Jack running to his position. "Covenant! Watch the door!" Jack yells, withdrawing his M6 SOCOM. They open fire on the Grunts and Jackals attempting to flank them, and reload. "Those guys dropped in behind us, they know this is our rally point!" Jack exclaims, covering the rear and moving in. "Terrific." Mickey responds, almost sarcastically. "Come on, we've got weapons and ammunition on the high ground." Jack grunted, running towards a heavy machine gun and ripping it off of its tripod. The covenant arrive in force, dropping a wraith. Mickey finds a Spartan Laser, and fires it at the Wraith, destroying it instantly. "Nice work!" the Spartan shouted. "All enemy forces eliminated. We hold the fort." Alice announces over the loudspeaker.

"What's your name Spartan?" Dutch asks, depolarizing his visor. "Jack. You heard from your Gunnery Sergeant?" he responds, removing his helmet. "No, we haven't. Haven't heard from our Sniper or Captain either." Mickey interjects. "Guess it's just us then." Dutch responds, looking around. "My vote? We hold up here, wait for more back up." Mickey announces, when suddenly the door opens, making the Spartan and the two ODS aim their weapons at it. "Oh thank god! Do one of you know how to use explosives?" an NMPD officer exclaims,

making the three operators look at each other. "Your vote? Just got overruled." the Spartan responds, walking past the officer and towards Alpha Site. Dutch follows close behind, and Mickey too.

"Ohh."

13. Tempest Perimeter

****Tempest Perimeter****

ONI Alpha Site, New Mombasa

October 20 2552, 18:08

"Troopers, I'll head into the building, set those charges!" Jack yells, sprinting towards Alpha Site. "Lord Hood, we made it." Alice announces. "Music to my ears. What's the SITREP on intelligence on the inside?" Hood responds, wiping his brow. "Everything is intact. I've got two ODST's blowing the bridge to deny the enemy to reach this far. Air defenses are down." Jack responds, removing a magazine from his MA5KS and placing a new one in it, slamming it into the receiver. "I need you to destroy this building Jack. The Covenant cannot gain any intelligence from this site. Do you understand? A Pelican is on the roof right now. We're diverting you to find Captain Dare. She's been out of contact for two hours now." "Roger sir. We'll get it done. Jack out." he exclaims. "Get charges in the building. Good luck sergeant." Jack announces, and enters the lift. "Jack, it might take hours for us to find the Captain. What if the Covenant glass New Mombasa?" Alice states, watching the NMPD officers go out of sight. "Maybe. Better not become Reach." he responds, removing his helmet and wiping his face from the sweat. He places it back on his head. When he got to the rooftop, the Pelican was waiting for him. He got in, and flew into the middle of the city.

14. Lone Wolf

****Lone Wolf****

Mombasa Streets, New Mombasa

October 20 2552, 21:25

Jack patrols the streets, moving through the same area that he went through an hour ago. He hears a familiar noise, and looks up, an ODST falls a great height from a building, the Spartan catching him. "So you're the Rookie? Been looking for you. We've gotta find Captain Dare. Hope you got you're as good as your profile says you are." Jack announces, but notices that the Helljumper doesn't say a word. "Curious. He's a mute. Interesting. I'll run background checks on him for you Jack." Alice interjects, searching info on him using the Battle-Net. "He's contracted post-traumatic vocal dis articulation. Doesn't say when. Still, monitoring all sub wave and normal wave radio freq's." Alice continues. "Can anyone hear me? This is Captain Veronica Dare! My beacon is active, I need immediate assistance! Someone, please respond!" the Captains voice booming through the Spartan's helmet, and the Rookies. Jack turns to the Rookie, and nods. He nods back. "Captain Dare, this is Spartan 260. Hang tight.

Where are you?" Jack exclaims over the radio, waiting for the reply. They head for the way point indicated by Alice on their HUD's, and reach an elevator shaft. They fast rope down, and reach the bottom. "They've got me cornered! I'm low on ammo! If you reach me, I'm on sub-level nine, near station t-" her transmission cuts out from static interference. Jack looks at the wall at the Rookie's right, which says SUB LEVEL 07, accompanied by the cities AI. After piling through small amounts of Covenant resistance, they reach a survivor, about to be killed. Jack and the Rookie destroy the enemy, and get to the NMPD officer, sweating profusely. "Thanks guys, they almost had me. I'm trying to get down to the next level to check on my team, but...this stack is locked down tight." he announces. Jack walks towards the stack, and it activates.

"Hold up a sec. I got to tech on a..personnel issue." the officer exclaims, walking up to a door on the left side of a frozen room. He enters, and the Spartan, curious, follows him. "What kind of personnel issue?" the Spartan replies, activating his white hot settings in his visor. "What are you, stupid? I told you to wait outside!" the officer yells, the Spartan getting up in his face. "What the fuck is this." the Spartan yells back, pointing at the body. "Kinsler gave me real specific instructions: Make sure the Doc's dead, and make double sure no one knows about it." the officer continues. The Rookie enters the room as well, and sees the body. He begins to raise his M6 SOCOM at the officer. "Sorry, you know way to much." the officer exclaims, raising his shotgun at the spartan. Jack raises his hands, and moves the shotgun in the air, the officer firing. The Rookie aims his SOCOM at the officer and fires, sending a round right through his skull. He drops, and falls to the ground, motionless. "Thanks bud." Jack whispers, giving the Rookie the thumbs up. Jack moves towards the body, and checks for a pulse. Nothing. He takes the persons identification, and stores it in his side pouch. "Let's go Corporal." Jack announces.

"Buck? Who knows if he can hear me but... I'm sorry. I should have told you more about this mission, more... about everything." Dare announces over the network. The Rookie and Jack moving closer and closer to her beacon. They eliminate a lance squad, and reach the location. The spartan approaches the doorway, and knocks six times. The door opens and Dare pulls the lever on her pistol. Seeing the Spartan there, and the Rookie, she seems surprised. "Thank you Spartan. You too.. What was your name again?" she muttered. A strange gurgle like sound is heard, and she motions for them to get inside. "Some idiots blew the building at the top of the shaft. Woke the whole hive." she continues, shaking her head. "Orders are orders 'mam. We did what was necessary." Jack responds, removing his helmet. She looks to him as if she was to slap him, but decides not to. "Down there? That's the Superintendent. The AI that runs every system in the city. Our mission is to secure the Superintendent's data. Problem is, there's only one way in from here... Right through the hive. It would've been suicide to go alone, and I was hoping for more backup. A Spartan and an ODS, surprised me." "He surprised me too 'mam. We should get moving." Jack interjects, placing his helmet back on his head.

The three of them enter the Data Center, weapons at the ready. At the end of the room is the data core. As the Spartan moves closer to look at it, a spark lights off in it and there is a strange noise. The door closes, and they turn on their lights. The screen in front of them shuts off, and they walk to the core. Suddenly, a small tentacle

appears through the hole. Dare raises her pistol, but Jack stops her. "Wait." he whispers, and motions for the Rookie to come forward. He whistles, and a Huragok comes forward. "Ho-ly shit." Dare announces, watching the Engineer move closer to Jack. He removes his helmet, and places it at his side. "This what you were looking for Captain?" he responds, looking at her. "Yes. ONI calls them Engineers, believes they're some sort of biological supercomputer. If I'm right, this one's taken the Superintendents data and combined it with it's own. Everything we need to know about the Covenant, what they're looking for underneath the city is right in there." she points to the head of it. Jack moves towards the screen and inserts Alice into the mainframe. A black figure appears on screen, another ODST. "Buck!" Dare yells through her radio, hoping that he hears her. "Veronica? Where the hell are you?" he responds. "Data Center, but we're coming out."

"We?"

End
file.